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WRIGHT ON BRONZE WEAPONS.

At the recent meeting of the British Association at Birmingham, Mr. Wright read a paper entitled "On the True Assignment of the Bronze Weapons, supposed to indicate a Bronze Age in Western and Northern Europe." The paper is a very fair attack on the classification of the Northern antiquaries respecting the stone, bronze, and iron ages. The subject is one of great interest and importance; and this has induced us to give some copious extracts from this communication. Mr. Wright, at the end of his paper, appears to us to have gone somewhat out of his way to attack the views recently promulgated by the illustrious anthropologist M. Nilsson, respecting the supposed colonisation of this country by the Phœnicians, and goes so far as to say it is "unworthy of the serious consideration of the antiquary." We believe M. Nilsson's theory is eminently worthy of the most serious attention of the anthropologist; and we have consequently devoted a space to show what his views really are.

Mr. Wright commenced by observing:—

"Within a few years there has come into existence, I will not say a new science, but certainly a new and very extraordinary field for scientific inquiry. Not long ago, antiquaries limited their knowledge of the remains of human industry in this part of the world to a few generations, at most, before the date when we are made acquainted with its inhabitants by the Roman historians, and everybody was satisfied with the biblical account, that mankind had existed upon this earth somewhat more than six thousand years. It is but recently that we were all surprised by the announcement that flint implements, which had evidently been formed by man's hand, had been found in the geological formation known by the name of drift. As soon as this discovery became an accepted fact, and more general attention was called to the subject, it was discovered that these flint implements, instead of being rare (as we might perhaps have expected), were, in many parts where the drift was examined, so abundant as to imply the evidence of a considerable population at a period of course preceding the formation of the drift itself. These implements present a great uniformity in shape, and to some degree in size,—at all events, there are only two or three

varieties, and it is remarkable that, while the fossil bones of various animals are found in the same drift, there has been as yet no authentic discovery of human bones ; yet there appears to be no room for doubt that these implements are really the work of man. Of course, according to the opinions of geologists on the age of the drift, this discovery would carry back the existence of man on earth to an immense distance beyond the biblical date, and it leaves us for speculation and theory a period of far greater extent than the whole historical period. The question of the Antiquity of Man became thus an attractive, and even an exciting study. It happened that the northern—the Scandinavian—antiquaries, whose peculiar fault is a spirit of too hasty generalising, had already started an ingenious theory in relation to these pre-historic times, according to which these were divided into three periods or ages, distinguished by the names of stone age, bronze age, and iron age. During the first of these periods, metal was unknown to man, and stone was the best material he had for the manufacture of weapons or of other implements for cutting or hammering ; the second was characterised by the use of bronze as the only metal ; in the third, bronze had been superseded for these purposes by iron. This system of periods was eagerly embraced by the new school of pre-historic antiquaries, who have even refined upon it and divided at least the first two periods into subdivisions.

“It is this dark and mysterious pre-historic period which has furnished the subject treated in the handsome volume recently published by my friend Sir John Lubbock, which treats successively on the system of periods or ages just mentioned, on the tumuli of the pre-historic times, on the lake habitations, shell mounds, and caves, on the more general subject of the Antiquity of Man himself, and on the manners of modern savages, which the author employs very judiciously to illustrate those of the savages of pre-historic ages, for absolute savages at all times bear a certain resemblance to one another. I will only add, as to the book itself, that it is a well written and well arranged work, characterised equally by purity of language and by its singular clearness and perspicuity, while it presents a view of the whole subject, which surprises us by its comprehensiveness, without wearying us with what too often constitutes comprehensiveness, a close dry mass of enumerations of facts. My intention on the present occasion is to take Sir John Lubbock’s work only from one point of view—so far as its talented author treats of the system of periods—a system which, it is tolerably well known that I, in common with antiquaries of some eminence in their science, reject altogether, and look upon as a mere delusion, and some parts of the first chapters of my friend’s book are aimed at me ; that is, they are directed against opinions which I have expressed and

which are here rightly put into my mouth, and I am glad of the opportunity of explaining my reasons rather more fully. It will be understood by everybody that whatever strictures I have to make are directed, not against Sir John Lubbock's writings, but against the opinions on the school of pre-historic archæologists which he has adopted, and which are here stated more fairly and distinctly than in any other work with which I am acquainted.

"I am by no means inclined to impugn hastily the general conclusions to which men of science seem now arriving upon the great question of the antiquity of man—it is a subject in regard to which I look forward with anxious interest to the increase of our knowledge, certain that the ultimate result must be truth. *Magna est veritas, et prævalet.* But I complain of the treatment which the science of archæology has hitherto received at their hands. There was a cry some time ago—and nobody joined in it more heartily than myself—that a close alliance should exist between archæology and geology; but this was to have been a fair and equal alliance, in which the geologist should accept the conclusions of archæology on the same footing as the archæologist is expected to receive the opinions of the geologist. Instead of this, the geologist seems to have considered that the science he had thus to give his hand to is a vague and uncertain one,—he has created a sort of archæology of his own, made in the first place to suit his own theories, and he takes only the advice of those who will give him an opinion which is in accordance with a foregone conclusion, and this is often quite contrary to the teachings of archæological science. Archæology, as a science, has now reached too high a position to be treated with so little respect. But let us go on to the more especial subject now before me.

"Sir John Lubbock alleges that 'Mr. Wright sees nothing in Great Britain which can be referred to ante-Roman times' (p. 35); and upon this he remarks (p. 36), 'But if we are to refer not only the bronze implements, but also those of stone, to the Roman period, what implements, we may ask, does Mr. Wright suppose were used by the ancient Britons before the arrival of Cæsar? It would be more reasonable to deny the existence of ancient Britons at once, than thus to deprive them, as it were, of all means of obtaining subsistence.' What I have said on this subject must have been strangely misunderstood, or I may have explained myself badly; for I am entirely unconscious of having ever uttered an opinion which could bear the interpretation here given to it. I have said, and I still say, that I do not believe we have many—perhaps any—monuments of importance much older than the Roman period, and that such ancient remains as are supposed to be older than the Roman period bear no characteristics

which would enable us to ascribe them to any particular date. I have never pretended to deprive the Britons of the use of stone,—it would not be in my power; but I say that stone was also in use for the same purposes in Roman and Saxon times, and that the mere presence of a stone implement does not prove that the deposit was British any more than Roman. Stone, of various kinds, is a very ready and convenient material for purposes such as the stone implements of antiquity evidently served, and it is found in use in Western Europe even in the middle ages. Stone implements have often been found on Roman sites in this island; they have been found in Saxon graves in Kent, and I have myself found flint flakes, evidently placed there by the hand of man, in Saxon graves in the Isle of Wight, perfectly resembling those of which the geologists have talked so much of late. The Abbé Cochet found similar flint flakes in Roman graves in Normandy, so arranged as to leave no doubt that they were placed there intentionally.

“Sir John, indeed, acknowledges that implements in stone were in use in Roman times, but it was not so much a difference between the poor and the rich, as he puts it (the structure of society was altogether different from that of modern times), as between different localities. It would be very wrong to suppose that the social condition of Britain under the Romans was uniform in cultivation and condition throughout the province. There were no doubt “savages” in wild and retired parts of the island, as there have been in much more recent times, and communication between distant localities, except on the lines of the great roads, was slow and precarious. People must thus have been frequently exposed to the inconvenience of falling short of metals, which, moreover, were probably always expensive, and then they would be obliged to have recourse to stones, the use of which would thus be habitual. People, under this state of society, could not go to obtain their flint implements at distant manufactories, but must either have made them individually for themselves, or, at the most, there may have been a man in each village or rural district who was more skilful in making them than his neighbours, and supplied them to those who were able to purchase. In this manner there must have been, throughout the land, at the same time, a vast variety in the form and style of flint implements, according to local taste or individual caprice, so that it would be absurd to consider difference of form and character as a proof of difference of date. In primitive times diversity, and not uniformity, was usually the rule, and sometimes this difference of form and design became almost a family distinction. Among the Anglo-Saxons, long after they had risen above the character of savages, the different tribes were distinguished by different forms

of personal ornaments, and we know that in much later times the clans of the Scottish highlanders have been similarly distinguished by the patterns of their plaids.

“But enough of stone for the present—let us proceed to bronze, which forms the grand corner-stone of the edifice of this system of periods. We may, perhaps, consider as the most important of these objects of bronze the swords, because they present a greater number of peculiarities of form than any of the other classes, and the circumstances connected with their discoveries seem at a first glance of the subject to suggest more difficulty in identifying them with the Romans ; I shall, therefore, take them as the special object of my investigation, but the arguments I shall use with regard to them apply with still more force to the other objects made of the same metal. . . .

“Sir John asserts that ‘bronze weapons are *never found associated* with coins, pottery, or other relics of Roman origin ;’ he then proceeds to quote a statement of mine to the effect that on all the sites of ruined Roman towns these other objects are found scattered about rather abundantly ; and he adds somewhat triumphantly, ‘We may assume, then, on the authority of Mr. Wright himself, that, if all these bronze arms were really of Roman origin, many of them would have been found from time to time in conjunction with other Roman remains.’ I can admit of no such assumption as arising from the facts I have stated ; and I am sorry to be obliged to say that this remark only shows that my friend, in common with the advocates of this system of periods generally, is but imperfectly acquainted with the archæological conditions of the question. The reason we do not find bronze swords under the circumstances which he insists upon, is a very simple one, easily explained, and applies to iron swords equally with bronze swords. The Romans did not bury their weapons with the dead, and they took great care of them, especially of the sword, while alive. Even in the last struggles of the empire, when the Romans must sometimes have been obliged to leave their weapons behind them, the barbarians, among whom we know that a sword was an object of inestimable value, took very good care to carry them away. The consequence of this is that a Roman sword in iron is one of the rarest objects in antiquarian discovery. I remember, within my own observation, hardly a single instance of one having been found in Roman Britain, and not above two swords supposed to have been found here, and it is my impression that the bronze handle of one of the latter presented a considerable resemblance, in its style of ornament, to those of some of the bronze swords found in Scandinavia. During the whole of our excavations at Wroxeter, which have filled a considerable museum with articles of Roman fabrication, we

have never met with the smallest fragment of a Roman sword, nor do I remember a single instance of such a find on any site of a Roman town or villa in this island. In one or two cases in the west of England, as in the very remarkable discoveries at Hod Hill, in Dorsetshire, bundles of unfinished iron blades, which looked like swords, have been discovered under circumstances which appeared to me to show that they had been government stores on their way to some imperial manufactory where the finish was to be given to them ; other antiquaries thought they were not swords at all, and I think they may be right ; but it is a very remarkable circumstance that among the Roman antiquities found at Hod Hill there was one undoubted iron sword-blade, and this was in every respect *an exact copy* of one of the swords in bronze, of which we are now speaking, a proof beyond doubt that the latter were at that time well known. This Roman sword-blade possesses the characteristic leaf-shape, with the ribs, and the holes for the rivets, by which the handle was fixed on. The fact of no Roman swords in iron being found, would be rather in favour of the bronze swords being Roman. Again, Sir John Lubbock gives as one of his arguments against me the fact that the bronze and iron swords and other implements are not found mixed together in the same locality. It seems to me that this is exactly what we might expect, especially in the case of the swords. These, as I have just observed, were valuable articles, and were probably, at least in the provinces, in possession of few individuals, except the military. The inhabitants of a lacustrine village, for instance, were not likely to be in possession of a sword, unless they had stolen it, and whence would they steal it ? From some soldier belonging to the nearest military post. I am sure that Sir John Lubbock will allow that it has never been the custom to arm any corps of troops with a variety of weapons—if their swords were bronze, they were all bronze, if iron, all iron. The discovery, therefore, of weapons in any particular place would only necessarily show that it was the weapon with which the detachment of Roman troops stationed in that neighbourhood—or, at least, nearest to it—were armed. But I think that it is stated rather rashly that bronze swords are not found with iron swords ; for in the very rare instances of the discovery of Roman iron swords found in Britain, in, I believe, almost a majority of cases they have been found associated with bronze swords. A few years ago a Roman sword in a bronze scabbard, the blade appearing from the rust to be of iron, was dredged up from the Thames, along with a very fine specimen of the well-known bronze leaf-shaped sword, and a large stone celt, all which are now in the museum of Lord Londesborough, at Grimston Park, in Yorkshire ; and a similar iron sword in a bronze scabbard was

found together with a bronze sword in the river below Lincoln, at a spot where a bronze circular shield had previously been found. The discovery, in one or two instances, of a mass of bronze implements, with no mixture of iron, leads only to the conclusion that they had formed the stock-in-trade of some dealer in bronze implements, or that they had been a consignment of such articles lost on the way. But of this I shall say more.

“I must, however, state generally that the archæological fact is that, instead of our *not* finding the bronze swords in juxtaposition with Roman remains, in every case where they have been found in Britain or Gaul, where the details of the discovery have been carefully observed, it has occurred under circumstances which lead to the strongest presumption of their being Roman. A bronze sword, of the usual leaf-shaped type, is stated to have been found at the Roman station of Ardoch in Scotland, on the wall of Antoninus, and there appears no reason to doubt the accuracy of the statement. But, to come further south, it is well known to the archæologist that the great treasury of the antiquities of Roman London—and of mediæval London also—is the mud of the river Thames, and within the limits of the town, I believe that no object has been found that could claim an earlier date than Roman. This is just the place where objects of all kinds would be deposited by accidents, such as boats upsetting in the transit, people falling in and being drowned, and the dropping into the water of objects of various kinds which would sink by their weight. Now swords have been found in the Thames at London, and I should underrate the number in saying a few, but they were nearly all of bronze, and leaf-shaped in form, which might almost be taken to show that this bronze sword was most in fashion among the Romans in London. Certain it is, that my friend Mr. Roach Smith, who has examined these Roman antiquities of London more extensively and deeply than anybody else, and whom I have no hesitation in saying that I regard as the first authority on the antiquities of the Roman period in England or even on the continent, is convinced, equally with me, that the bronze swords are of Roman manufacture or origin. Discoveries of the axes, chisels, and other implements of bronze, have been much more frequent, and in positions which speak still more strongly of their Roman character. Thomas Hearne, who first called attention to these objects more than a century ago, took it for granted that they were Roman, but he unfortunately gave it as his opinion that they represented the Roman *celtis* (a technical word for a sort of chisel), and, in the low ebb at which archæological knowledge has stood from his time down to the present generation, antiquaries seem to have blindly fallen into the mistake that the name *celt* (*celtis*) was

equivalent to *Celtic*, and that it meant that they belonged to the ancient Britons. In this blunder solely, I believe, originated the notion that these 'celts' are not Roman.

"Let us now cross the Channel to our neighbours, and see what is the case in Gaul. France has undoubtedly produced by far the ablest, the soundest, and the most judicious antiquaries of modern times; and I believe that they have all regarded the bronze swords, equally with the other bronze implements, as Roman. I will quote the authority of Monsieur de Caumont, to which I am sure that nobody who knows anything of archæology will object. In his *Cours d'Antiquités Monumentales*, De Caumont, in speaking of these so-called 'celts', says, 'But we find also very frequently these bronze axes in places covered with Roman ruins; I have acquired the certainty of this by my own observations and by the information I have collected in my travels.' Again, the same distinguished scholar, in speaking of the bronze swords, after noticing the opinion of a previous writer who thought that the Gauls had derived the use of these swords from the Greeks, goes on to say, 'At all events, I must not conceal from you the fact that the bronze swords have been found sometimes along with objects of Roman manufacture, which would seem to announce a different origin.'

"I will go back a little farther among the antiquaries of France to produce not only opinions, but facts, such as I think ought to set the whole question at rest. At the beginning of the present century flourished the able antiquary Antoine Mongez, one of the most celebrated members of the Institute of France, a man distinguished for his science and learning, and for his judicious use of them. On the 16th of Prairial, an 9 (for we are still in the days of the republic), according to our reckoning the 5th of June 1801, the "citoyen" Mongez read at the Institute, before what was then called the Class of Literature and Fine Arts, but which is now represented by the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, a memoir on an ancient bronze sword, which had been found with the skeleton of a man and horse, in a turbarry (*tourbière*) near Corbie, at Hailly, in the valley of the Albert, a tributary of the Somme. In this memoir, which is published in the volume of the papers read before the class, this sword is described, and figured in an engraving; it is entirely of bronze, blade and handle. The object of Mongez was chiefly to analyse the bronze of which this sword was made; but he also enters into the question of what manufacture it might be, and, after careful discussion, he arrives at the conclusion that these bronze swords were all Roman. On the 8th Frimaire, an 10 of the Republic, or the 29th of November 1801, in

our reckoning, M. Mongez read another paper on three bronze swords which had been recently found near Abbeville, and which resembled the other so closely that he thought it unnecessary to have them engraved. Mongez re-considered the question, and again pronounced them Roman—*je les crois Romaines*.

“After Mongez had read his Memoires on the bronze swords before the Institute, his opinion received a singularly remarkable confirmation in a more exact and complete account of the circumstances of the discoveries, which he obtained from a very zealous and able antiquary of Abbeville, M. Traullé. The bronze sword, as just stated, was found in the turbary at Heilly along with the skeletons of a man and a horse, and by the sword were four brass coins of the Emperor Caracalla, who, as is well known, reigned from A.D. 211 to 217. This sword, therefore, was that of a Roman cavalry soldier, not older, and perhaps a little later, than this reign, who had sunk in the bog to which the turbary had succeeded. The history of two of the other swords, found in a turbary at Pequigny, near Abbeville, was, if anything, still more curious. A large boat was found, which had evidently sunk, and in it were several skeletons. One of these had on his head a bronze casque, or helmet, accompanied with the remains of the other accoutrements of a soldier. The bronze sword lay by his side, and with it some Roman coins, some of which, if not all, were middle brass of the Emperor Maxentius, who reigned from 306 to 312. Another similar sword was found in the turbary outside the boat, which would appear to have been sunk in a skirmish after some of its crew had been killed in it. We learn here that Roman soldiers, in the wars and troubles which agitated Gaul in the third and fourth centuries after Christ, were armed with these bronze swords which some have so ingeniously supposed to have been brought into this island by the Phœnicians, some seventeen or eighteen hundred years before the Christian era. From the time of Mongez, the French antiquaries have regarded the bronze swords as Roman.

“I have thus crept on from one little, though significant, fact to another, until it seems to me tolerably clear that they all point to one conclusion, that the bronze swords found so often in different parts of western and northern Europe are Roman; that is, that they were all either of Roman manufacture, or, at the least, copied from Roman models. I consider that this evidence is sufficiently strong, but still it will be worthy of inquiry, whether it be confirmed by pictorial delineations on Roman monuments. I have no doubt that with a little labour we might bring together a mass of corroborative evidence of this description which would be quite irresistible, but I regret to say that pressing engagements of a different character will not at present allow

me to undertake that labour myself to its full extent. I think, however, that I can produce a few very satisfactory samples of it—and I will only take them in two classes of such monuments.

“First, as to the sculptures on stone, the figure of a Roman soldier, generally on horseback, is a common adjunct to sepulchral inscriptions found in the Roman cemeteries. Unfortunately, the soldier usually has his sword by his side in its sheath, and although the shape of the sheath would lead us to believe that they did hold blades of the different known forms of the bronze swords, yet we cannot insist upon it. If the sheath were made of the form of the blade of a leaf-shaped sword, of course the blade could not be drawn out, it is, therefore, represented in one uniform shape, distinguished only from any ordinary scabbard by being short. However, I feel convinced that I have seen one or two of these sculptures in which the Roman soldier held the sword drawn, and in which it was clearly leaf-shaped; but I cannot at this moment put my hands upon them. If any one, however, will take the trouble to look over the plates of that readiest of all books of reference, the *père Montfaucon's Antiquité Expliquée*, he must be convinced of the absurdity of denying that these swords are Roman. In the sculptures on the arch of Constantine at Rome, about contemporary with the bronze swords found near Abbeville, and described by Mongez, the Roman soldiers are evidently armed with the leaf-shaped swords, as well as with the other forms, a circumstance which brings into immediate relation the forms and the metal. . . .

“We see at a glance that the dagger with which Cæsar was slain was identical in every particular with those found in the tumuli of Britain, which some antiquaries are now ascribing to the remote age of Phœnician colonies!

“Thus we see that the bronze swords, the bronze shields, the bronze spears, the bronze daggers, which have been found in Britain, are all Roman in character. The so-called ‘celts,’ chisels, etc., bear the same character with the weapons, and are sometimes found with them, and probably continued in use later. It is my firm conviction that not a bit of bronze which has been found in the British islands belongs to an older date than that at which Cæsar wrote that the Britons obtained their bronze from abroad, meaning, of course, from Gaul, *ære utuntur importato*. In fact, these objects in bronze were Roman in character, and in their primary origin.

And who has ever brought forward any evidence to show that the Romans did not use bronze for their weapons? Pliny tells us that, in the treaty which concluded the war between Porsena and the Romans after the expulsion of the Tarquins, that is about five hundred years before Christ, it was expressly stipulated that the Romans thenceforth

should use iron for nothing but agricultural purposes. Our acquaintance with the condition of that time is not sufficiently minute to enable us to judge what was the cause or the object of this stipulation, but it seems clear that swords were not made of iron, and they must, therefore, have been made of bronze. This stipulation continued in force during some three centuries, and it was only after the second Punic war, we are told, that the Romans began to adopt the form and material of the sword as it was in use among the Spaniards. Polybius tells a curious anecdote relating to the great victory obtained by the Romans over the Gauls during the consulate of Caius Flaminius, a little more than two hundred years before Christ. He informs us that the Gauls were armed with long pointless swords, which they used only in striking the enemy, while the Romans used short, stiff, pointed swords, with which they stabbed at the face and person. When the Gauls struck hard, the blade of the sword became so much bent that the soldier had to straighten it with his foot before he could strike another blow. The Roman officers, having observed this, directed the soldiers to close upon the ranks of the Gauls, and thrust vigorously at their bodies and faces before the latter had time to recover the use of their swords, and by this manœuvre the great inequality of numbers was partly compensated. . . .

“When Sir John Lubbock (p. 35) says that I “lay much stress on the fact that the bronze weapons have generally been found near Roman stations and Roman roads,” he has applied to the weapons what I had said of a rather different object. During ages when travelling was neither quick nor safe, and people seldom took long journeys unnecessarily, they had to depend for many even of the necessities of life upon men who carried them round for sale periodically, and a multitude of people gained their living as itinerant traders and manufacturers. It was a practice general throughout the middle ages, no doubt derived from the Romans, and the very utility of such dealers formed their protection against injury and interruption. We find abundant traces of this practice, curiously enough, in relation to the bronze swords and hatchets. These consist in discoveries of deposits, usually of an earthen vessel for melting bronze, of which there is sometimes a residuum at the bottom, of moulds for casting the implements, and generally of some broken swords or other bronze implements, no doubt intended to be melted down for metal, and of similar articles entire, constituting stock in trade. Now my remark was, that these tools and stock of itinerant bronze manufacturers are almost always found near a Roman road, or in the neighbourhood of a Roman station, and that therefore we are justified in considering them as Roman subjects, who had travelled along the Roman roads, and rested

at those spots for personal or local reasons which are unknown to us. Discoveries of such deposits have been very numerous in Britain, Gaul, Switzerland, and Germany. I am not aware if they have been found on the other confines of the empire. One of these, consisting of a quantity of bronze celts, both entire and broken, was found near the foot of the Wrekin in Shropshire, not far from the great Roman road, the Watling Street; another, among which there were fragments of a bronze sword, at Sittingbourne, on the Kentish portion of the Watling-street; a third, consisting of bronze punches, chisels, and other implements, with several pieces of unused metal, one of which was evidently the residuum of the melting-pot, at Attleborough in Norfolk, on the Roman road between Thetford and Norwich; a fourth, consisting of sixty bronze chisels, etc., with a portion of a bronze sword and a piece of bronze which again appeared to be the residue from melting, all contained in an earthen pot, at Weston in Yorkshire, on the road from Old Malton (where there are the remains of a Roman town) to York. It is not necessary to enumerate any further examples. Sir John Lubbock seeks to explain the position of these finds by supposing that the Roman roads were laid upon older British roads, but this is an objection to which I cannot listen until he brings me the slightest substantial evidence that such was the case. To me, these "finds" alone are sufficient to explain a fact which Sir John hardly, or only feebly, denies, the identity of forms, and not mere similarity, of all these bronze swords, in whatever part of Europe they are found. I cannot imagine that any one will believe that this identity of form, is the result of chance, but they must have been derived from one general centre; and, when we consider the radius through which they are scattered, it was only the Roman empire that could have supplied such a centre. It is nonsense to suppose that, brought into Britain at a remote and obscure period by the Phœnicians, they could have spread in this manner. The whole mystery, then, is dispelled by the proceedings of these itinerant manufacturers, who must have been very numerous, and who went not only to the limits of the Roman province, but, no doubt, penetrated into the surrounding countries, and made weapons for their inhabitants. It was, for these, the easiest way of obtaining weapons. Swords were so rare, and so valued, among the Scandinavians and Teutons, that they believed them to have been forged by the gods; and I beg to state that the arms which the gods forged were made of iron. There are many reasons, into which I will not now enter, for believing that it was a subject of honour and glory, among the different branches of the Teutonic race, for a man to possess a sword; and here the "barbarian" had a chance of getting a sword to wear by his side at not so great an expense of wealth and

trouble as if it had been made by the gods, and he no doubt profited largely by it. And then, the "barbarians," contrary to the Roman practice, buried their weapons with the dead, in consequence of which we find in their graves a sufficiency of those weapons to fill our museums, while we only pick up one now and then within the bounds of the Roman empire. Such is the case with Ireland, where, by the way, it has been somewhat too hastily asserted that the Roman arms never penetrated, seeing that we know little of the *history* of our islands under the Romans,—that Juvenal, speaking as of a fact generally known, asserts,—

"Arma quidem ultra
Litora Juvernæ promovimus",—

and that Roman antiquities are now found in Ireland. Such is the case with Scandinavia, and also of the other countries of Europe bordering upon the Roman provinces. It has been alleged that some of the ornamentation of the Scandinavian bronze-work is not Roman in its character, which is true—but why? It is not probable that an enterprising people like the Scandinavians would be satisfied to remain long dependant on the precarious supplies, as they must have been at such a distance, of wandering merchants, and they would soon learn to imitate what they had seen done by others. Roman ornamentation and design, in their hands, would soon undergo degradation, until it took a character of its own, just as it did among the Anglo-Saxons, and among the Germans, and indeed among all the other non-Roman peoples into whose hands it fell. I have always held the belief that the mass of the Scandinavian ornamented bronze is nothing more than the development of Roman popular art under the influence of barbaric taste; and I think this will hardly be denied by any one who is familiarly acquainted with the forms and spirit of Roman art."

Mr. Wright concludes as follows:—"I will only repeat the belief, on which I have always insisted, that in this part of the world the use of bronze did not precede that of iron, and I believe that I am fully supported in this view by the opinion of our great metallurgist, my friend Dr. Percy. At the time of Caesar's invasion, as that great warrior and statesman declares deliberately, the only bronze known to the Britons was imported; of course from Gaul, and it could not have come in large quantities. The Britons could not have made bronze themselves, for I am satisfied, by my own researches among our ancient mines, that no copper was obtained in this island until it was found by the Romans. I am informed that, instead of being easy, the process of mining copper or tin, and preparing bronze, is very complicated and difficult; whereas the smelting of iron is extremely easy, and in some parts of our island, as in the forest of Dean, the iron ore

presented itself on the surface, and in a form which could not fail to draw the attention of men who knew anything about metals. I confess that I only look upon the modern myth of the colonisation of this island by the Phœnicians as unworthy the consideration of a serious antiquary. It is based upon speculations which have no historical foundation. In these new questions which are agitated by men of science, we must enter upon the study of the remote period of archæology of which we have no practical knowledge, with a very profound knowledge of the subsequent historic period; whereas this new school of antiquaries prefer contemplating altogether the doubtful period speculatively from the utterly unknown period which preceded it, to going back to it from the known period which followed. Indeed, I fear that far too much of prehistoric archæology, as it has been hitherto presented to us, rests only upon a want of knowledge of what is historic."

We cordially agree with Mr. Wright in the last paragraph, and think he has done a good service in pointing out this fact.

NILSSON ON THE BRONZE AGE.

THREE decades have nearly elapsed since Sven Nilsson, the eminent Swedish anthropologist, published a large work "on the primitive inhabitants of Scandinavia, etc."* The book now before us is the first part of a new and enlarged edition,† which Prof. Nilsson is publishing, and which is entirely devoted to the bronze age. The fundamental theory which pervades the whole of the first section amounts to nothing less than this—that neither the Celts nor the Goths introduced civilisation and bronze into the North, and especially into Scandinavia, but the *Phœnicians*, who established factories, built temples, introduced Baal-worship, and remained in Scandinavia for so long a period, until, by intermixture, they became gradually absorbed in the mass of the native population.

That such a theory, so contrary to all current notions on this subject, will and must greatly stagger the archæologist, historian, and

* *Skandinaviska Nordens Ur-Juvenare, ett Försö i Komparativa Ethnografien och ett Bidrag till Menniskoslügtets Utvecklings-Historia.* Lund., 1838-1843. "The Primitive Inhabitants of Scandinavia"; an Essay in Comparative Ethnography, and a Contribution to the History of the Development of the Human Species.

† *Andra omarbetade och tiltakta upplagan.* Bronsåldern (Stockholm. 1862).